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The Athenian Mercury:

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

Saturday, *April* 8. 1693.

Queſt. 1. *PRay reſolve me —— Where is* Preſter John's *Countrey? what's the Original of that Name, and what Religion the Natives are of?*

Anſw. We think it moſt proper to begin with the ſecond Queſtion — What's the meaning and Original of the Name or Title *Preſter John: Paulus Venetus*, if we are not miſtaken, is the firſt Hiſtorian who makes any mention of ſuch a Prince; he's call'd by ſeveral Names, or if you will, there are ſeveral Corruptions of his true Name or Title: He's ſtyl'd by the Italians *Preſte*, or *Preſtegianni*, or *Giovanni*, which gave riſe to our *Preſter*, by ſome Presbyter *John*, whence he was at firſt thought a ſort of a Melchizedekian Prince, both Prieſt and King. *Scaliger* thinks the true word is *Friſtigiani*, or the Apoſtolick Prince, but the moſt tolerable Conjecture ſeems to us to be that of thoſe who think him ſtyl'd by the Perſians *Preſter Chan*, which ſignifies, as *Ludolfus* tells us, either the Prince of the *Adorers*, namely Chriſtians, or Prince of the beſt *Servants*, as *Blancard* in his Notes upon *Curtius*, quoted in the forementioned Author. This for the *Name*, now for the *Place*, wherein there is not leſs difficulty: Its generally agreed the true *Preſter John* was a Chriſtian Aſiatick Prince, his Territories lying ſomewhere between *Tenduc* and *Cathaia*, which laſt there's now no doubt is no other then a part of *China*, in which Countreys there remain'd no obſcure footſteps of Chriſtianity, when the Jeſuits firſt came hither: This Prince the *Portugueſe* long ſought after, but not being able to diſcover him, ſome of 'em heard of a Kingdom of Chriſtians in *Africa*, call'd *Abyſſinia* or *Ethiopia*, and the Prince thereof it ſeems they were reſolv'd ſhou'd be *Preſter John*, ſince they cou'd find no other. This Name therefore he retains amongſt us Europeans, his Countrey lying toward the middle of *Africa*, North of the Cape of *Good-Hope*, South of *Egypt*, waſh'd to the Eaſt, or Eaſt and by South, with the Red-Sea: His Territories were formerly large and famous, now reduc'd into a narrow Compaſs by the *Turks* and his own Rebels, ſome hundreds of thouſands of the Natives being beſides deſtroy'd in Religious Wars, on accounts of the Jeſuits, who vainly endeavour'd to ſettle there the Romiſh Religion —— Now as to their own proper Religion, the ſecond thing to be conſider'd, 'tis neareſt that of the Greek Church, tho' there ſeem therein ſome mixtures of Judaiſm, and other Errors. We han't room to give a particular Account of their Confeſſion of Faith, only in general, for their Errors, they with the Greek Church deny the proceſſion of the Holy Spirit from Son as well as Father. The Jeſuits ſay, they own but one Nature in Chriſt, that they repeat Baptiſm every year, theſe are their principal Errors: On the other ſide, they have a venerable Eſteem of the Holy Scriptures, acknowledging them the only Rule of Faith and Life. They own no Purgatory, thô they have a ſort of Good Wiſhes for the Dead, as had the Ancient Chriſtians and Jews. In Nice Points of Religion they ſuffer men to be of different Sentiments; they believe the Trinity, deny Tranſubſtantiation, yet ſeem to own a Real preſence; and theſe are the moſt conſiderable things we know of them, let thoſe conſult *Job Ludolfus* his excellent Hiſtory, who deſire further ſatisfaction.

Queſt. 2. *You told us your ſenſe of the Book of the* Confeſſion of Theodore John: *but you would do well further to direct how the Doubting ſort of People may be ſatisfied of the truth of the matter of fact?*

Anſw. That the Author gives in his *Preface* to it, where he tells you his Lodgings are at Mr. *Mears*'s a Hatter at *Puddle-dock*. And beſides, Mr. *Edgar*, Miniſter of the Lutheran Church in Little *Trinity-lane*, *London*, is a Perſon well known to the *Eminent Clergy* of this Town, to whom, as well as to the Author himſelf, if any ſhall pleaſe to go, they will not miſs of the ſatisfaction they deſire; thus much for *matter of fact*: Then as for the *Book* it ſelf, which is already in the hands of our moſt *Eminent Prelates* and *Learned Clergy*, with their high Approbation, they will find ſo full and worthy a Character of it in the *Compleat Library for March*, now coming out, where that Judicious Author gives not only his own, but the ſenſe of ſome of the *chiefeſt Divines* of our Church about it, that it will very well anſwer the Expectation of them that ſhall read it, and altogether ſuperſede what we can further ſay about it here.

Queſt. 3. *with the 7 following from* Dublin] *Why does Moſes in the tenth Chap. of* Geneſis, *after he has enumerated the Sons of Cuſh in the 7th. verſe, add in the 8th. that Cuſh begat Nimrod? was he a Baſtard, or is it ſpoken becauſe he became the moſt famous among his Brethren?*

Anſw. For the *latter Reaſon*, We ſuppoſe, which ſeems fairly intimated in what follows, He was a *mighty Hunter* of *Beaſts*, We think, rather than *Men*, and the beginning of his Empire is afterwards deſcrib'd.

Beſides, 'tis very probable he was the Youngeſt of all the Sons of *Cuſh*, becauſe nam'd after all the reſt; which if true, what becomes of the ſo much talk'd of *Patriarchal regal Power*, We mean, as it has been roundly aſſerted of univerſal and eternal Obligation, this *Nimrod* being, We think, generally granted the Father of Monarchy? And is't not much better to let things of that Nature reſt on the ſteddy Laws and Conſtitutions of Kingdoms, than on ſuch weak and unfaithful Foundations as ſome People have laid for 'em, on which they may indeed build *high*, but not *ſafe*, any more than *Nimrods* Subjects, when their fooliſh Tower was brought to *Confuſion*.

Queſt. 4. *What's your Opinion of Mr.* C— S—— *Annotations?*

Anſw. We han't read 'em, but every one knows the Author, that he was an honeſt well meaning Man, but of no great *depth*, and he ſeems by thoſe Works of his which we have ſeen, to have read too much to have well digeſted it.

Queſt. 5. *I find in the ſaid Mr.* C— S— *Commentary on the 18th. v. of the 13th. Chap. of the* Revelations, *where the number of the Beaſt is ſet down, this aſſertion,* "The "number 25, which is the ſquare Root of 666, is marvelouſly applicable to the City and Church of *Rome* "in ſeveral particulars, as 12 the Root of 144 is to the "New *Jeruſalem: Pray your Judgment in this Matter?*

Anſw. We ſhan't ſay much on't, becauſe We know not what to think of the ſo often boaſted myſtical Power of Numbers — This We own is as pretty as moſt of that kind, and what is to be ſaid for it, may be ſeen at large in the Works of the Learned and Reverend Mr. *Mead*, to which we muſt referr the Reader.

Queſt. 6. *Some time ſince happening to be preſent at a Wedding in a Countrey Church, I plac'd my ſelf, as ſoon as the Miniſter began the Ceremony, juſt behind a Pew, in which was a Young Gentlewoman of a conſiderable Fortune, a good Face and ſhape, an Acquaintance and Relation of mine, together with her Mother and Brother: A Gentleman who ſtood by, came and deliver'd her to me in the place of her Father, he being dead; having her by the hand, I repeated the words after the Miniſter with an audible voice, and the Lady, thô ſhe did not ſpeak the Obliging words, yet did not endeavour*

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to disengage her Hand from mine, tho' for my part I us'd all the Ceremonies requir'd and made use of at such a Solemnity — Pray is this a Valid Marriage, or how far binding either Party?

Answ. We think you did not well to Jest in so Serious a Business as Matrimony (verily) is: But if you say you were in Earnest, so it seems was not the Lady, she not repeating the Binding Words — for which Reason it can only be a Marriage on one side, which is just none at all.

Quest. 7. *In the Society of some Persons who are my Equals in Age and Quality, and of no disagreeable Temper, and for whom I've no Aversion, I yet find my self very uneasie, and under so great Constraint that I can't Discourse or use the Liberty which in the Company of others of higher Quality, greater Age and Gravity I can freely take: Pray the Reason of this? and be pleas'd to Advise me how I shall attain to an Easiness of Behaviour and Unconcernedness in Discourse in all Companies?*

Answ. You ought to have been particular, whether it's *one Person* or *more*, Man or Woman that thus disturbs you — If one Woman, (whether she you stood behind the Pevv with, or any other —) it's a very dangerous Symptom, and you ought to be shut up with an Inscription at your Door for Suspition of *Love*. If they are more than one, or of the other Sex, it's possible there may be some unaccountable Antipathy (We might e'ne as well have call'd it an Occult Quality) between your Body and theirs: But it seems clear, the Cause of this can't be a Want of Assurance and Conversation, because 'tis not so when you're with other Persons, and if Natural, We suppose you don't expect any Remedy.

Quest. 8. *Have Moles in the different Parts of the Body any signification, or are they purely accidental?*

Answ. We think 'em only *accidental*, because many Persons who have had *Moles* in the same Places, have yet been of perfectly contrary Dispositions, and met with different Fortunes — But this We have our selves Observ'd, that they for the most part answer one another, as *Saunders* and others affert on that Subject.

Quest. 9. *I know a Gentleman who was Born with a Mark upon his Right Arm, near the Joint of his Shoulder, about the breadth of an* English *Six-pence, of a very lively bright and white Colour, far exceeding the other part of his Body, tho' they are also of a very good Complexion, having several Radius's proceeding from the Center unto all the parts of its Circumference: Pray let me know whether this may presage any thing extraordinary to him?*

Answ. We have heard of a teeming Woman that long'd for the Wind of a pair of Bellows, but one wou'd think this Gentleman's Mother had a Mind to a Belly-full of the Sun or some Star or other, and losing her Longing thus markt her Son. There have been several whole Families and Races have had particular Marks for a long succession, particularly the *Anchor* in that of one of *Alexander*'s Successors, but no *Presage* that We know or believe in the whole matter, either of good or evil.

Quest. 10. *What's a Death-Watch?*

Answ. See our former Papers, where that is already resolv'd — And so much for as many of our *Dublin* Questions as We at present think fit to Answer.

Quest. 11. *What think you of the strange Story mention'd in* La-Crose's *Memoirs, and the* Monthly Mercury, *concerning the Fellow that by his wonderful* Wand *discovers Money, Robbers, Murders, and so many strange things beside — and supposing the Matter of Fact true, what is your Opinion of the Hypothesis, whereby* La-Crose *attempts to solve it?*

Answ. When We read the Story first in the Mercury (where the Translator, We thank him, has turn'd this *Conjurer*, or whatever he is, into a *Minister*) We were not at all inclin'd to believe it, thinking it only a *Gratrix* sort of a business, or a trick of the French Kings to get what Wealth his Subjects had under Ground, since he has all that is above Ground already — But on reading what Mr. *De la Crose* says about it in his last Journals, to be Ingenious, We know not well what to think on't, since so well circumstantiated and attested, that it seems both immodest and foolish either to doubt or deny it. As for the reason on't, in our Judgment the forementi-on'd Author has laid down a very probable one, and we think the best that the thing will bear, but whether true or no, requires more Consideration, and perhaps Judgment too than we can bestow in examining it, only thus much we'll add upon't, that if the presence of an ordinary Robber or Murderer, will make the Peasants Wand whisk round at such a rate, certainly he might find some of that Character both at *Versails* and St. *Germains*, at whose sight his Wand wou'd twirl so fast, that 'twou'd be impossible for him to hold it.

Next Tuesday *will be Printed the* Bristol *Questions.*

☞ The Compleat Library *for* March *will be Publish'd next* Monday.

Advertisements.

Next *Monday* will be Publish'd

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☞ *The Mourners Directory*, guiding him to the Middle Way betwixt the two Extreams, Defect, Excess of Sorrow for his Dead. To which is added *The Mourners Soliloquy*. By *Thomas Doolittle*, M. A.

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There is in the Press

AN Account of the late Dreadful Earthquake in the Island of *Sicily*, on the *9th.* 10*th.* and 11*th.* of *January*, 1693. Translated from the Italian Copy Printed at *Rome*, by Authority. *London*, Printed for *Richard Baldwin* near the *Oxford Arms* in *Warwick-lane*.

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TRavels into divers parts of *Europe* and *Asia*, Undertaken by the *French* King's Order for the Discovery of several New Roads into *China*: Containing many singular Remarks in Natural Phylosophy, Geography, Hydrography and History; together with *A Description of the GREAT TARTARY*, and the different People that Inhabit there. By Father *Avril* of the Order of the Jesuites. Done from the *French* Copy Printed at *Paris*. Licensed and Enter'd according to Order.

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